

some of the more difficult and lower paying jobs in the country have lost their work. These are family members, heads of families, and they are out there wondering whether or not the next job is going to be available for them. So they are, in a sense, victims because, clearly, the events of September 11 have impacted their lives.

Many of us are suggesting as part of this economic package that we include extending unemployment benefits and health care, and we say to those people and their families that we wish we could provide you with a job tomorrow. We can't. We wish we could produce one for you immediately. We can't do that. But we can reach out to you and say during the next number of weeks we are going to provide extended unemployment benefits to you and see to it that States get back some dollars from Medicaid and the COBRA program, so you can have health care coverage during this time of difficulty. I don't think that is an exaggerated or excessive request. I hoped, frankly, that the request would be made of us to do this, rather than we making a request of the President and others to support this.

This is America. We are coming together as a people. Everybody who is hurt and has suffered as a result of these tragic events deserves an extended hand to try to see if we can't lift them up.

I was so impressed yesterday while watching the film clips of the people in New York. Average citizens were racing to help the firemen, helping to extend the hoses to try to put out the fires in the communities that were devastated by the downed aircraft. What a wonderful photograph, in a sense, during a time of tragedy. Average citizens—not firemen or policemen but people in civilian clothes—were running along the streets, grabbing firehoses and helping the departments reach the flames to try to save lives and property. That is my America. That is the America I know.

I want to see my Congress and my national leadership be as those people in the streets of Queens yesterday who were racing along to help out during a time of tragedy. That is what this economic package we have crafted tries to do. It is short term, it is focused, it is fiscally responsible, and it tries to help people who are suffering. That is all we are trying to do—give a tax rebate, a tax cut for the folks who didn't get it last spring so they might have additional dollars in their pockets to provide for family needs, and to see to it that we might invest some dollars as well in hardening up our infrastructure in the country.

Put aside September 11 for a minute. How many times have we heard over the last number of years that if you don't maintain the basic infrastructure of your country—roads, bridges, mass transit systems—economic growth suffers? So this bill will also include some dollars to try to harden up this infrastructure so we will be better prepared

to withstand the kinds of terrorist attacks that could occur that would put those pieces of infrastructure in harm's way. This bill will provide some resources for that. Of course, it puts people to work. Imagine that; we might put some people to work by passing this bill.

That is basically the package. It is designed to provide unemployment benefits, health care benefits, dollars for infrastructure, and a tax cut for people who did not get one so they might not only get a break themselves but also contribute to the demand side of the equation which is necessary if this economic stimulus package is going to provide additional lift during this time of difficulty.

I hope in these next couple of days we can come together. We have done it before in the last few weeks. These are not excessive requests. This is a fiscally responsible plan. We have done so much in the last 10 years to put our economy on a footing that none of us imagined would ever be the case: that we would actually be in a situation where we would be talking about eliminating the national debt if we wanted.

How many of us have seen those clocks in almost every city that rapidly show the increase of the national debt? Yet over the last 10 years as the result of some very fine leadership in Congress, by the Federal Reserve, and obviously the White House, we were able to make a difference to put this country on a path many people thought we could not get on again.

As we talk about an economic recovery package, it must be fiscally responsible. If we are going to spend ourselves once again into huge debt, I cannot imagine anything more that Osama bin Laden or his supporters would like to see than us not only weakened from their attacks on September 11 but that we would weaken our economy either because we made excessive tax cuts or spending additions that were unwise.

As most Americans, I am stunned. I represent the most affluent State in the country, and certainly many of my constituents would benefit directly. They are some of the top income earners in the country. I do not hear my constituents talking about the need for a \$1.3 million tax break for IBM or the Ford Motor Company as a result of repealing the alternative minimum tax.

Where is the sense of contribution? Are they like the people in the streets of Queens running and dragging those hoses along to help put out the fires, somebody who is probably making \$20,000 or \$30,000? Some of them are retired. They were racing along to help stop a fire. How about that coming out of the top income earners in the country to help put out the fire in a sense? That is all we are asking.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has consumed 10 minutes.

Mr. DODD. I thank the Chair. I will wrap up by saying I hope we can find some common ground this week and do what the American public expects of

us. I would so much love to hear my President ask me to extend these unemployment benefits and provide health care. Presidents in the past have done it.

This President is doing a wonderful job in the battle in central Asia. All of us appreciate his work and the work of his team. I know he is occupied with that now, but we also would like him to appreciate the battle going on at home.

Madam President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. In my capacity as a Senator from the State of New York, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the hour of 12:30 p.m. having arrived, the Senate will stand in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon the Senate, at 12:29 p.m., recessed until 2:17 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. BAYH).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina is recognized.

Mr. HELMS I thank the Chair.

#### CONTINUATION OF AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, I speak on some legislation filed by distinguished Senators relative to S. 1673 this past Friday. I am honored to join with my distinguished colleagues in offering legislation to provide the maximum flexibility and stability our farmers need to make proper business decisions based on market conditions.

I am mindful, of course, of agriculture's importance to our country's economy and to America's security. I might add that agriculture is the No. 1 industry in North Carolina. Our farmers rank third in the Nation behind California and Florida in agricultural diversification.

It is with genuine appreciation that I join Senator LINCOLN, Senator HUTCHINSON, and Senator MILLER in working together in crafting this bill. The farm bill we are introducing will be helpful in our guaranteeing that American farmers will continue to provide the American people with the safe and adequate food supply that too many take for granted.

The past several years have been a genuine challenge to farmers, whether their operations are large or small. Farmers and their families have long been the backbone of countless rural communities. Every day, farmers face new challenges by literally dozens of factors beyond their control, from weather to insect infestation, to overreaching regulations that unnecessarily increase the cost of production,